

2975 Laurel Street #20
San Diego, California 92104
August 11, 1982

Dear Bobby,

I'm sorry that it has taken so long to get this package off to you. But reading, copying, and editing these letters has been much more time consuming than I expected. In addition, I have had a lot of second thoughts about sharing this material. Much of it is personal or exposes emotions or attitudes that I now find somewhat embarrassing.

During the span of eleven months when these letters were written, there is a very definite change in the feelings expressed (at least between the lines, if not overtly). And the fifteen years that have transpired since I left Viet Nam have brought even greater changes in my evaluation of my participation in the war. I guess that's true for all of us, but for me, the very experience of the war produced philosophical changes that would preclude my ever participating in another war. And, obviously, some views expressed in these letters (especially the early ones) are incompatible with views that I now hold.

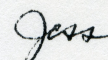
I am not ashamed of having changed my position on war in general or my experiences in Viet Nam. Those changes are a result of learning and growing. However, I would be very ashamed if I participated (through the sharing of these letters) in a book that attempted to glorify or justify warfare.

I have no right or intention of telling you what the theme of your writing should be. But I have ^a moral responsibility to make it clear that you may not use any of the enclosed material for the purposes of glorifying any individual, the Marine Corps, the Hospital Corps, or warfare. With those restrictions, it may take great writing skill to use any of the information contained in the letters. I welcome your reaction.

The words of ^{an} anonymous gay Viet Nam veteran often come to my mind and in many ways sum up my feelings toward war, the military and much of the machoism that it fosters. The quote goes something like this: "The US military gave me a medal for killing many men and a dishonorable discharge for loving one." I can identify very closely with that thought because it very nearly happened to me. My investigation for "homosexual activity" was called off "for lack of evidence", and I refused the Silver Star nomination because of what it represented. But the experience had a lasting impact on my sense of self worth and my system of values.

Good luck to you and your efforts with the book. I'll be interested in your progress.

Yours in the struggle,



Jess